

## MAINE GROWERS SHOULD HEED PRELIMINARY HEALTH STUDY RESULTS

Exposure to acutely toxic or "hot" pesticides like azinphos-methyl or paraquat will quickly get your attention. There will be no question as to what is making you sick. In contrast, repeated exposures to low acute toxicity products like maneb or captan generally will not make you sick right away. But forgetting to wear the right gloves or not washing up right after use of these products just might lead to an even costlier fate...cancer or lung, liver or kidney damage...years down the road.

A long-term national study is examining nearly 90,000 pesticide applicators and their spouses from Iowa and North Carolina over the course of 15 years (1993-2008).

The *Agricultural Health Study*—a joint effort of the National Cancer Institute, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Environmental Protection Agency—is investigating whether exposure to pesticides or other farm-related exposures (grain dusts, metals and solvents) and lifestyle factors (diet, exercise, smoking, etc.) increase the risk of cancer and other diseases in farmers.



**LIFESTYLE** Anyway you look at it too many people are getting cancer nowadays. A lot of the risks of cancer come from lifestyle choices. At the top of the list are being a **COUCH POTATO, SMOKING** or using **TOBACCO**.

While farmers live longer and have less heart disease and certain types of cancer (lung, esophagus, bladder and colon) than the rest of the population, they have more injuries and higher levels of other types of cancer (Hodgkins and non-Hodgkins lymphoma, leukemia, multiple myeloma, lip, stomach, prostate and brain tumors).

The study focuses on understanding the factors that may increase risks of disease for farmers. Researchers found farmers who report being exposed to pesticides have certain characteristics and work practices in common (see *Other Risk Factors* reverse side).

Researchers go on to report that while these factors are not necessarily the cause of pesticide exposure, identifying these factors is the first step in prevention.

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## OLD LEFTOVER PESTICIDES: A TIME BOMB

Don't let leftover pesticides become a tragedy. Banned and unusable products can pose harm to the environment and to your health—unintentionally or intentionally, like the deadly New Sweden arsenic poisoning.

"You never know how or when forgotten chemicals might turn up again," said Lebel Hicks, BPC pesticides toxicologist.

"The New Sweden incident is an unfortunate reminder for growers to clean out the barn. Storing obsolete pesticides invites disaster. Leaks or spills can contaminate soil and water and are costly to fix."



Mike Petella of BPC Environmental Services sorts obsolete pesticides at the Augusta drop off site.

Hazardous waste disposal is costly and dumping chemicals is illegal.

Fortunately, there's a third option that's both legal and responsible. Even better it's free.

BPC offers a once a year disposal program for banned pesticides or pesticides that have become caked, frozen or otherwise rendered unusable.

The 2003 program collected 6,888 pounds of obsolete pesticides.

Register today for next year's disposal program: call 207-287-2731 or mail in the obsolete pesticide inventory form found on the Web at [www.thinkfirstspraylast.org](http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org).

## AG TRADES SHOW

JAN 13-15

AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER

### PESTICIDE APPLICATOR RECERTIFICATION

Tempted to let that license go? Don't use restricted use pesticides anymore? Wait...don't do it. The list of restricted use pesticides is not set in stone. What's a general use product today could be restricted use tomorrow. Plus, it only makes sense to continue your education. Pest management techniques become obsolete about as fast as computers.

Take time to catch one of the recertification sessions offered by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension and Maine Board of Pesticides Control. One credit will be allowed for attendance at an entire hour of each topic covered.

**TUES, JAN 13**

**KENNEBEC/PENOBSCOT ROOM**

11-12 Transition to Organic Dairy Farming, Rick Kersbergen/UMCE

1:30-2:30 How Transgenic Crops are Used, Gary Anderson/UMCE

3-4 Chronic Pesticide Health Issues and Prevention, Lebel Hicks/BPC

4:15-5:15 Vegetation Management on Small Woodlots and Christmas Tree Farms, Ron Lemin/UAP Timberlands

**WED, JAN 14**

**KENNEBEC/PENOBSCOT ROOM**

9-10 Apple Pest Management, Glen Koehler/UMCE

11:30-12:30 Personal Protective Equipment, Dick Brzozowski/UMCE

3:15-4:15 Worker Protection Standard-Frequently Asked Questions, Gary Fish/BPC

4:30-5:30 Pest Resistant Vegetable Varieties and Vegetable Pest Management, Mark Hutton/UMCE

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**MAINE BOARD OF PESTICIDES CONTROL**  
28 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, ME 04333  
207-287-2731  
[WWW.THINKFIRSTSPRAYLAST.ORG](http://WWW.THINKFIRSTSPRAYLAST.ORG)  
[PESTICIDES@MAINE.GOV](mailto:PESTICIDES@MAINE.GOV)

## AG HEALTH STUDY (CONT. . .)

As the study continues and researchers take steps to figure out whether exposures are linked to ill health and disease, today's take home message is farmers should be keenly aware that risks taken over the course of a farming career could lead to chronic disease later on in life.

For more information on the *Agricultural Health Study*, go to [www.aghealth.org](http://www.aghealth.org).

### OTHER RISK FACTORS

High pesticide exposure occurs more often if you:

- ▶ are male
- ▶ are a commercial applicator

- ▶ repair your own equipment
- ▶ have a larger farm
- ▶ mix your own pesticides
- ▶ delay changing or washing your clothes after mixing/loading/applying pesticides
- ▶ mix pesticide application clothing with the family wash
- ▶ wash up inside the house rather than outside the house
- ▶ store pesticides in the home, basement or garage
- ▶ believe "accidents are just one of the occupational hazards of farming"

- ▶ cannot afford the right protective equipment
- ▶ use insecticides or fumigants
- ▶ use mist blowers, seed treatment, dips and ear tags

### WAYS TO REDUCE RISK

- ◆ evaluate your farm operation's risk factors
- ◆ try to reduce the risks in what you apply and how
- ◆ whatever chemical you use, check the label and the MSDS for toxicity
- ◆ make sure your protective equipment is—at a minimum—what is specified on the label
- ◆ develop careful mixing, loading and hygiene habits
- ◆

## RECERTIFICATION CALENDAR

JAN 6–8

TRI-STATE GREENHOUSE IPM PROGRAM

The Good, Bad & Ugly Bugs,  
3 locations and dates:

Jan 6: Longfellow's, Manchester, ME  
Jan 7: UNH, Durham, NH  
Jan 8: UVM, Burlington, VT

Margaret Skinner, 802-656-5440.  
6 credits available.

JAN 12–13

NE AG AVIATION ASSOC. ANNUAL MTG.

Harrisburg, PA. Glenn Martin, 717-337-1370. 12 credits available.

JAN 21–22

MAINE POTATO CONFERENCE

Caribou Inn & Conference Center,  
Caribou, ME. Jim Dwyer, 207-764-3361.  
Many credits available.

JAN 29

INSECTS & DISEASES OF ORNAMENTALS

O'Donalds Nursery, Gorham, ME.  
Susan Babb, 207-839-4262. 1 credit available.

Visit [www.thinkfirstspraylast.org](http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org) for an up-to-date recertification schedule.

## VIOLATIONS

BPC inspectors report growers commonly fail to:

- wear all the Personal Protective Equipment required by the label

- calibrate equipment and keep records of the calibration
- identify sensitive areas and keep records of them
- keep all of the required application records (FYI: chemical information only needs to be recorded once. Keeping a copy of the label with

records is one way to meet the requirement.)

- keep any records
- store pesticides in a secure enclosure
- comply with Worker Protection Standards:
  - post Central Information Displays
  - train agricultural workers or pesticide handlers

## AG TRADES SHOW (CONT. . .)

THU, JAN 15

KENNEBEC/PENOBSCOT ROOM

9–10 Water Quality Sampling Update & Common Pesticide Regulatory Compliance Concerns, Heather Jackson & Henry Jennings/BPC

10:15–11:15 Personal Protective Equipment, Dick Brzozowski/UMCE

1:30–2:30 Blueberry Pest Management, David Yarborough/UMCE

### PESTICIDE HANDLER TRAINING

The EPA Worker Protection Standard requires farm, nursery, greenhouse or forestry employees that mix, load or apply pesticides or work on pesticide contaminated equipment to be trained as pesticide handlers. No recertification credits are offered at this session.

WED, JAN 14

LINCOLN/OXFORD ROOM

9–10:30 Pesticide Handler Training, Jim Dill/UMCE & Gary Fish/BPC (for unlicensed employees who work directly with pesticides)

- notify workers of application
- provide decontamination sites within ¼ mile of worksite

Make it a New Year's resolution to examine your pesticide application practices. Don't get caught red-handed!

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AUGUSTA ME 04333-0028